

MANET

Edouard Manet (1832-1883) is not generally thought of as a taurine artist, but the great French impressionist nevertheless produced several superb paintings dealing with tauromaquia. Perhaps his most famous works in this field are two paintings which were originally one. *The Dead Toreador* and *The Bullfight* (1864) started out as parts of the same painting entitled, *An Incident in the Bullring*; after the work received harsh criticism by arts writers, Manet cut the canvas in two and then reworked both portions, the final result being today's two highly praised paintings.

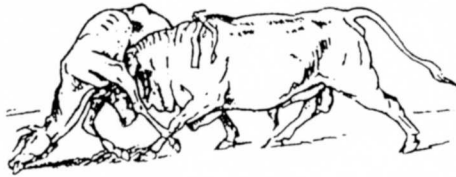


Edouard Manet

MYSTERY ARTIST: DEGAS OR DORÉ?

Another easily recognizable name is that of the French impressionist Edgar Degas (1834-1917), who is thought to have turned out a series of taurine-theme watercolors while a young man visiting Spain. Most of the examples believed to be the corridas-related works of Degas bear no signature or other formal key to the painter's identity, although one piece displays initials which might be either G.D. or E.D. While some art experts have credited the work to the French artist Gustave Doré, who was also interested in taurine subject matter, others believe it should be attributed to Degas, arguing that the style is not really that of Doré. It is known for certain that Degas used the signature "E.D." in 1851 on an artwork done in Spain, and this study would appear to have been done by the same person who created the watercolor series in question. Featured are scenes taken from corridas; one of them somewhat oddly shows two dark-skinned American Indian types wearing feather

headdresses and confronting a toro bravo with spears. Whether correctly attributable to Degas or to Doré, the pictures are well known and appear in many collections of taurine art reproductions.



Degas or Doré

POSADA

José Guadalupe Posada (1851-1913) of Aguascalientes, Mexico, sometimes referred to as "the Goya of Mexico," was a self-taught artist in a city famed for its taurine ferias. Starting out as a potter, Posada moved on to engraving and lithography, eventually producing an



José Guadalupe Posada

estimated 20,000 engravings, many of them taurine in subject, over forty-four years of untiring labor. It is difficult to convey just how prolific this artist was: a mere recitation of numbers does not do the job. Suffice it to say that he probably produced more works of art than any other taurine artist -- and perhaps more than any artist, period. Both José Clemente Orozco and Diego Rivera said later that Posada had exercised a determining influence in their careers. Dismissed by

academicians as "popular," his art was loved by millions of Mexicans and is still very much in favor today.

THE ENGLISH ARTISTS

Another important source country for taurine artists of the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries was Great Britain. This was an age before holidays in Spain had become somewhat *de rigueur* for so many Britons; indeed, in the times before the twentieth century, travel for mere pleasure to *anyplace* was often frowned on by many "moral people" as being frivolous, which meant that people of means with a travel urge sometimes felt it necessary to invent excuses for leaving the Sceptered Isle and visiting the Mediterranean lands with their pleasant climates. The usual reason given was "for health purposes," but it is not impossible to imagine a well-to-do nineteenth century English artist commiserating to members of his London club, "Sorry, chaps, but I shall be deprived of your company for a while. Have to go do a bit of painting in Spain. Light's better there, you know."

Of the British painters of things taurine, some of the better known include John F. Lewis, Lieutenant Colonel Hope Crealock, Colonel Maurice Keatinge, William Lake Price and David Robert.

PICASSO

When taurine artists are discussed, two names tend to dominate the subject: Francisco Goya and Pablo Picasso. The two Spaniards lived at different times, yet their lives were not divided by as many years as most people would probably think. In fact, only a little over fifty years separated their respective epochs, Goya dying in 1826 and Picasso being born in 1881. Their painting styles, of course -- especially if we are talking about a comparison involving Picasso's most abstract period -- were virtual light years apart. Even the respective production times of the two *Tauromaquias* was vastly disparate: Goya probably spent months creating his series, while Picasso knocked his